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INDIA'S YOUNG MEN

Their Perils and Safeguards

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YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, MADRAS

INDIA'S YOUNG MEN

It was in one of the smaller Indian stations that a leading Hindu remarked with sincerity: "Many of our people are attracted by the purity of the teachings of your sacred writings, but the attainment of a pure life seems just as difficult for the Christian as for the Hindu. Of the half dozen European Christians in this town, five are leading lives as purely animal as the most sensual rajah in the province; the sixth, the 'padre sahib,' leads a pure life and one of great sacrifice, but his life does not reflect credit on your religion, for I understand that the missionaries are hired on the understanding that they live above suspicion." The missionary knows no sadder sight than that of the British soldier or the American seaman (who to the native is, of course, a "Christian") staggering intoxicated from an oriental brothel, a jeering crowd of coolies at his heels. After his sojourn abroad Tommy Atkins sings:

"Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,

Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man can raise a thirst."

And not only a thirst for whiskey, but a fiery, demon-like thirst for long nights of reveling after the scorching days; a thirst for that thrilling recklessness of absolute self-

abandonment which creeps over him with the thought that winding lanes, green fields, and happy kindred are leagues and leagues away and he is unnoticed and alone.

If Here Then There

If the Young Men's Christian Association is needed in North America, where the restraints of home and Church and society are numerous and alert, it is thrice needed for the European (in India all white men whether American or British are classed as Europeans), in a land where wholesome ideas are not all-pervading—where the every-day religious exercises of the common people are loathsome rather than uplifting, sensual rather than inspiring. In India homesickness, the depressing environment of low standards, an almost universal ignorance, and a widespread servility combine to undermine even the strongest characters. With great wisdom large sums of money are being spent by Christian people on mission work in India. The godless, careless lives of Europeans are conceded to be obstacles to the largest success. It is apparent that in order to safeguard these generous investments, money and energy must be used in throwing about the European young men influences which make for righteousness. If the Scottish employer of hundreds of Indian laborers is a man of low morals, his example will raise impenetrable barriers to the influence of the missionary in the same district.

"Chummeries"

In the large cities of India the Association aims to equip modern buildings with the usual features of the best North American Associations. One of the most fruitful of these is provision for "a home away from home." Most of the boarding houses and hotels are unattractive; worse than

this, they are usually centers of gambling and intemperance. The "chummery," where a group of fellows club together, hire their own butler, and keep bachelor quarters, is an effort to realize a more homelike life. Even the chummeries are honeycombed with temptation for the lad just landed from the homeland. When the Imperial Census was being taken in Rangoon, at a house where a half dozen young business men were living, one of the servants without hesitation stated that he was the procurer for the house. So faulty has been the standard in European society that when a retired officer, whom the whole city knew had kept a mistress in his house for years, was influenced by a friend to do the right thing and marry, he was blackballed in the club, and at once completely ostracised from society because he had married such a woman.

A Right Start

Because the first few months so often determine a man's destiny in India we make it possible for new arrivals to come to the Association boarding house, live there for six months or so, and when they have made acquaintance of strong, clean friends, then they move out, and make way for others fresh from home. Two young Scots landed by the same steamer to join a firm in one of the great port cities; one was persuaded to live at the Association; the other went to a chummery because he said he wanted to get on fast and so must get in with "the crowd" from the start. The first, through the influence of the Association, was led to a personal knowledge of the Savior, joined the Church, and today, as the head of his department, is one of the most powerful forces for righteousness in the city. The other did get on "fast," but in another direction; his passions became his master. When it was too late he pleaded to be taken into



MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION HOSTEL, RANGOON

the Association boarding house. His firm had already booked his passage home, and thither he went, one of the sad bits of wreckage that line the triumphant course of modern commercialism.

If this world-wide expansion of trade is to bring the largest good, the business men of Christendom must invest largely in the Association's effort, not merely to make men cleaner and fitter for the day's work. They must be turned into such loyal believers in the expansion of the teachings of Christ that they shall use their unique influence as men of affairs to strengthen and make even more effective the splendid work of the missionaries.

The Primary Task

The Association is not in India, however, primarily to save Europeans from themselves. The most urgent cry has been that of the crisis among educated Indians. It has long been the policy of Britain to throw upon the Indian peoples as much responsibility as possible for the administration of the Government. Of 144,150 appointments holding *Rs. 1,000 annually ninety-seven per cent are filled by the natives of India themselves. To fit the Indian, who has been used to a feudal order, to have a part in this well-nigh democratic administration of affairs, requires a modern and Western education. Following the lead of the missionaries, who have ever been the pioneers of education, Britain has built up a splendid system of schools and colleges. There are 180 colleges for men in the Empire and the Government has great universities at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, and Allahabad. The Indian student of to-day works almost wholly in the English language, and takes up about the same subjects as the English lad at Eton and Oxford.

*A rupee equals one-third of a dollar.

What must be the influence of a handful of college trained men in a land where only twelve per cent of the male population can read. These students are to be the leaders of the nation. As magistrates, revenue officers, judges, lawyers, inspectors of traffic and trade—replacing the rajahs and princes of olden times—they will have supreme influence in village and district. These are to shape the thought and mould the lives of India's myriads.

Shattering Idols

During schooldays the new knowledge of the Occident is hardly assimilated. The boy still remains devoted to the superstitious religious observances of his home. In an out of the way town I once saw a high school boy, just out from recitations, his books under his arm, starting down the street for home. He saw a Brahman approaching; kneeling, he laid his Shakespeare on the ground, and with his hands wiped the dust from the dirty bare feet of the Brahman and then drew his hands over his forehead and eyes—because the very dust from the holy man's feet was purifying to him.

When he leaves school, however, and goes up to the great university, for the first time he begins to appreciate the learning of the West. The modern commercial spirit is everywhere evident. On the train en route from home he travels in a modern car. At every side station he notices Eurasian officials, hustling holy Brahmans and coolie outcasts into the same seat. Arriving at his destination, Madras, Calcutta or Bombay, he is thunderstruck by the maze of trolley cars, the telegraphs, automobiles, great department stores, magnificent hotels, parks, and boulevards. An air of scorn for anything that savors of the old village worship pervades the college lecture room. The "Holi," which used to bring merriment as a boy, now ap-



PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, MADRAS

pears as one of the most obscenely disgusting of religious observances. Features of the Mahurram, which used to seem harmless enough, he now taboos as the fanaticism of the ignorant crowd. In a word the scales are falling from his eyes. The old implicit faith in Hinduism has vanished; with this discovery comes lack of faith in good. Far better that he be held by his parents' religion than pass through the critical college days and on into life without any religion at all. There is a sad irony in the college, that by its Western teaching shatters the student's faith in his ancestral rites and at the same time is unable (because it is a government institution) to give a knowledge of the one religion which will be satisfying.

Onslaught of Vice

At this period in the Indian student's life, when he is most in need of a lofty ideal and religious inspiration, he is assailed as never before by fierce temptation. Oriental immorality tinged with the commercial spirit of the West trebles its agents and flings insidious inducements to vice into the very face of the student. Many a boy going to his lodgings from school has to pass through streets which are flanked with the glittering divans of the harlot. Vice, cheap, widespread, and attractive, is ever dangerous, but when it beckons the passionate Indian youth who has spurned his old religion and is adrift, a sceptic, its voice lures to the very depths of hell.

What a fearful responsibility the missionaries have placed on the Young Men's Christian Association by summoning it to the mighty task of helping to save India from domination by an intellectual aristocracy that has renounced religion, and finds its ideals in personal ambition and passion. The North American Associations did well to delay long and tremblingly before picking up the gauntlet which was flung at their feet.

Called by the Church

The Association is in India at the call of the missionaries who represent the Christian Church. It was in 1887 that Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, of India, came to Northfield to urge the claims of that land upon the Young Men's Christian Association. In 1888, the missionaries of the evangelical churches of Madras sent an appeal to the International Committee, asking that a secretary be sent to their city. The International Convention, which met in Philadelphia in 1889, authorized the appointment of a secretary to work

in Madras. Mr. David McConaughy, the general secretary at Philadelphia, sailed in October, 1889. No more striking testimony to the work has been presented than a resolution passed at the Decennial Missionary Conference in Madras in 1902, which was the most representative gathering of missionaries ever held in India; all the Protestant societies sent their ablest leaders. The resolution reads as follows:

The Conference hereby records its hearty and thorough appreciation of the work of the Young Men's Christian Association in India, Burma and Ceylon. The Conference commends its general principles and methods, and affectionately accords to those engaged in its work its prayers and fellowship, and emphasizes the strong claim which the Young Men's Christian Association work in India has already established upon the prayers, sympathy and support of the Home Churches.

Not a Side Issue

Now that at last the obligation has been assumed, there is nothing ahead but increasing energy and sacrifice. Let this not appear as a mere side issue in the work of the home Associations. Unless we spring into the fray with our best men backed by most generous resources, the North American Associations will have failed to discharge their duty to the Church of Christ. The missionaries who have bade us do this work are the ambassadors of the home Church which every local Association aims to serve.

Occidental Principles in Oriental Problems

The same principles underlie the Association work at home and abroad. The Indian student, like his cousins across the seas, has a body, a mind, and a soul. Our largest Associations have well equipped gymnasiums. Much attention is given to out-of-door recreation. Association



OPEN AIR MEETING

teams have stood high in public athletic contests. The occasions for social intercourse are doing much to establish the idea, so foreign to India, of a universal brotherhood. The public restaurant and lunch counter has been potent in breaking down the artificial restrictions of caste and racial jealousy.

Keystone Department

The department which towers above all others is that of religious work. To many a student, doubting his own religion, we have been able to open the Bible for the first time. Bible classes, personal work, lectures on Christianity, and preaching in the open air to great audiences of college men are means used effectively. Many come from curiosity and some to hear correct English, but others come in earnestness to discover the way of life. Appeals to lecture on

Christianity have come to us from colleges where there was not a single Christian student. In one college, after I had spoken without compromise on the supremacy of Christianity, the Hindu students and professors waited on me in a body, begging me to remain with them a solid fortnight.

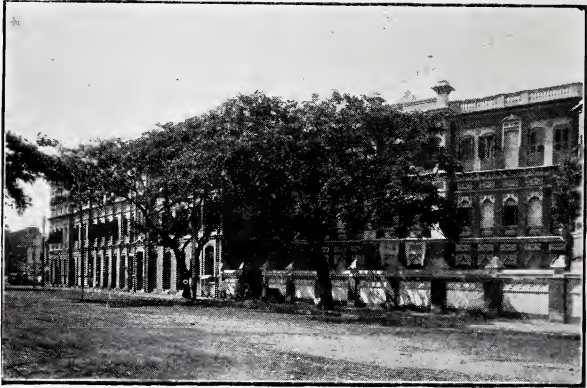
Bible study is conspicuous among Association activities, for the teaching of the Scriptures is the prime thing that we have to give. An increase over last year in the number of students in Bible classes of over fifty-eight per cent indicates the possibilities in this department. With an exceedingly inadequate staff of secretaries we are touching the fringe only of the real opportunity.

In the Concrete

Calcutta is the largest student center; in its colleges are registered more men than in Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Chicago. Besides the 12,000 university students there are upwards of 30,000 boys in the great high schools of Calcutta. Within a half mile of 86 College Street—the student and boys' buildings—there are 4,000 university men and 6,000 high school boys. The Association conducts a hostel or boarding club, and maintains numerous Bible classes, lectures and religious meetings. Open-air services are frequently held, attended largely by students.

Adjoining the college branch is the boys' building given by Mr. Wanamaker. The well-equipped gymnasium is an absolutely unique thing among Indian schoolboys. Already two young graduates of Calcutta University are engaged in secretarial work in the boys' branch alone. The central branch, in the business section of the city, is working for Europeans and is paying all expenses, including the salary of the secretary.

Madras is the metropolis, capital, social and educational



COLLEGE AND BOYS' BUILDINGS, CALCUTTA

center of a Presidency more populous than the British Isles. In this city to which these millions turn for their standard of civilization the Association is becoming an increasing force for righteousness. Within the splendid building on the Esplanade 600 members are being influenced in the direction of Christ's conception of manhood. Caste is being destroyed among the sixty residents (twelve races) of the hostel and the many more restaurant patrons who eat together—Mohammedans, Parsees, Hindus, and Christians. For several years its business and technical courses have led the Presidency in the number of students who made the Government examinations. The physical department guides the exercise of the city and is leading men to supplement the reflective Indian life with an appreciation and possession of the physique demanded by modern conditions. Without devices inquiring Hindus fill the Bible classes, limited in number and duration only by the endurance of the

available teaching force. Business men are being won to Christian faith and to belief in the whole missionary enterprise. An Army Branch is nightly crowded with soldiers to find respite from the press of temptations which, as one said, "drive them either to the dogs or to be 'Bible thumpers'." These activities involve a budget of Rs. 8,000, exclusive of rentals, raised in Madras, and their direction taxes the time and energy of four Indian and three foreign secretaries.

American secretaries are also working in Allahabad and Bangalore, while Britain has her representatives in Bombay, Rangoon and Lahore.

Work for Railway Men

Recently a new kind of work in the Orient has been begun, namely, for railroad men. India has extensive railways, aggregating 25,931 miles, with about 125 division points, making this land the fifth in the world in mileage. Most of these lines are owned by the Government. Three hundred and fifty thousand men are employed. The men in the higher grades of the service speak English, though only 5,300 are Europeans. The railroad Associations of North America have recently sent to India a secretary, Mr. F. J. Michel, who has had experience in the railroad work in the United States, to pioneer the work on the Indian railways.

Facts of Progress

Each year Associations are organized in new centers. At present, after scarcely fifteen years of effort, there are many more than 100 Associations in India, with a total membership of over 7,000. In the same period the Association prop-



G. S. EDDY AND BAND OF WORKERS

erty has increased from \$11,000 to \$400,000. Last year, besides the remarkable tours of Secretaries Eddy and Azariah, when literally hundreds declared their purpose to follow Christ; scores of men were reached for the Christian life by the Associations. Summer conferences, similar to Northfield and Geneva, held in several of the great provinces, have been effective in deepening the spiritual life, increasing Bible study, and stimulating men to decide for lives of service.

Untabulated Results

There are results, not only in statistics of attendance in gymnasiums, reading rooms, and Bible classes, but also of Hindus who have left all to follow the Christ. There are no mass movements among the students; for this reason the in-

dividual decision is all the more significant. A Brahman student after three years' residence in an Association hostel decided that he could only serve the people of his fatherland by becoming a Christian. It meant torture, starving, threatening, and final disinheritance. But he forsook all, remained staunch, and is to-day a tower of strength among his fellows. Our Savior's word that a man's foes shall be those of his own household is being constantly illustrated. The fibre of some of the young Indian converts would do credit to the young men of any land.

Caste or Character

A year ago I was traveling from Calcutta up to Allahabad. Half way up the line a Brahman gentleman entered the car. We engaged in conversation. At length I brought him to his attitude toward Christianity. He soon inquired if I knew anything about the Young Men's Christian Association. With a good deal of pride he told me that his son—a medical student in Calcutta—was living in the Association hostel (boarding house). "Has he no Brahman relatives in the city with whom he could live?" I asked. "Don't you know that in the Association hostel he is daily eating with low caste Hindus, with Mohammedans and with Christians, and so losing his caste?" "Yes," he said, "there are Brahman relatives he might live with and they have been anxious to have him, but I would much rather have him live at the Association and lose his caste but keep his character, than have him live with the holy relatives, adhere to the forms of caste, but lose his character." Indian parents are quick to realize what is beneficial to their sons. In the great cities there are none who understand more vividly than the educated men that India's only moral hope lies in the teachings of the Gospel.

By Indians for Indians

Our aim is not to undertake all this work ourselves. The great bulk of Indian students can only be evangelized by Indian students. We are building up strong Associations at pivotal points to be examples to an entire community, and to serve as training schools for the large numbers of young men on whom will rest ultimately the entire burden. It is apparent that a high standard must be set. We must have a force of secretaries at all these places sufficient not only to carry on the daily routine of an all-round Association; they must have a large amount of time to give to teaching, training, and inspiring strong men to lead the Indian Christian forces. Largely through the influence of one of our splendid native secretaries a portentous movement has been begun by which the Indian Christians of a large district (including many business and professional men) have set apart some of their own finest young men to go away into a distant province where the need is very great, learn a new language, and serve as the first foreign missionaries of that church. Nor is this an isolated case; in Ceylon, Bengal, and other parts of India, young men in enlarging numbers are giving their lives to this work. In the theological seminary at Insein, Burma, about one-fourth of all the students are volunteers preparing to go into new districts among strange peoples of different tongues as foreign missionaries to proclaim the Christ.

Increase of Christianity

The Christian Church in India has claims on the Church in the West as never before. Turn to the Imperial Census. Three decades ago Christianity increased by twenty-two per cent over the preceding decade. In the next decade



ASSOCIATION IN BANGALORE

there was another increase of twenty-two per cent. From 1891-1901 the Imperial Census shows an increase of twenty-seven per cent. If we go more deeply into the report it appears, on eliminating the Romanists (who have shown but little recent increase), that the number of native Protestant Christians in India during this last decade has increased over the preceding decade by no less than forty-eight per cent. It is not often that investments give such a large and, best of all, such a soul satisfying return.

High Recognition

Prominent men in India have not been slow to recognize that the Young Men's Christian Association came to India at an opportune moment, and that on its efforts hang the



SIR HENRY BLAKE, GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF THE
COLOMBO BUILDING

destinies of great numbers of people. What may we not expect if the Association continues to reach in large numbers the very leaders of Indian thought, the new aristocracy of Western learning and government position. In Allahabad the senior man in the civil service of the province, Sir John Stanley, is the president of the Association; the financial secretary to the Government is vice-president. The treasurer of the Association is the provincial auditor-general. The honorary president at Rangoon is the Lord Bishop; the president is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Lower Burma. The last two governors of the Province of Bengal, with a population as large as the United States, have been the last two presidents of the Association of Calcutta. The presidents of the Madras and Bombay Associations are men prominent in banking and business circles, respectively.

Government Favor

Even more significant is the approval shown by the Government itself. The Government of Burma sold the Association a building site valued at from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 100,000 for Rs. 30,000 (to be paid without interest in ten annual installments); besides this they made a cash grant toward the building of Rs. 8,000. The Government of Ceylon in recognition of the splendid public service rendered the community by the Colombo Young Men's Christian Association, has furnished an ideal site for the new building in that most desirable and expensive part of the city, the Fort. In Calcutta, besides helping with the building itself, the Government of Bengal is making a monthly grant towards running expenses of Rs. 100.

“Anywhere, Provided It Be Forward.”

It is not with hesitancy that the movement in India appeals to the North American Associations. It is their creation—it has been called into being by the missionaries of the Church. It is reaching Europeans of power in large numbers. It is influencing Indian young men all over the Empire to go into Government position and professional life, servants not of themselves, but of their fellowmen and of the Most High. It is influencing some of the choicest of these to give their lives to Association and missionary work. It is succeeding beyond all expectation. It has the support and interest of officials, business men, and the Government itself. It is becoming a mighty power for evangelism with the most mighty men of a myriad nation. Not only without hesitancy does India approach the home Associations, but also with a great boldness and confidence that they will rise to their splendid privilege in sending out men and money and prayer on such a scale that the world shall realize that the religion of Christ is indeed the power of God unto salvation for all mankind.

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